

What is PALESTINE?

Palestine is a region between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River with a long and rich history. Today, the Israeli state controls this entire territory.

Some people say "Palestine" to refer to the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem (Occupied Territories), or to the entire territory as it existed pre-1948 ('historic' Palestine).

What matters are the people, Palestinians, who have lived in the region for many generations and who now live under Israeli control, or in exile.

Figure 1



Palestinian borders from the British Mandate outlined in red.

'Historic' Palestine

The term 'historic Palestine' refers to the entire territory as it existed before 1948. Its borders were drawn by European colonial powers in the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916) and later, the British Mandate (1923).

After World War I and the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Palestine would be transferred into the colonial administration of Britain (i.e. 'British Mandate for Palestine'). (Figure 1)

In 1947, the United Nations recommended the partition of Palestine into two states, one for Jews and one for Arab Palestinians. Jews would be given 56% of the land, despite being only 30% of the population. Palestinians opposed this plan as a violation of self-determination.

UN-Proposed Israeli borders (1947)

Proposed Palestinian borders

Land seized beyond proposed Israeli borders (1948)

Did you know?

For all of Palestine's history, people of many different backgrounds have lived on the land, including Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

After conquest



Figure 2

Partition and dispossession

In 1948, Britain ended the British Mandate, and Zionist groups created the State of Israel through force. Zionist paramilitary groups, which had already started to dispossess Palestinians, became the State of Israel's de-facto military.

Between 1947 and 1949, 700,000 Palestinians were forced from their land, becoming refugees. Through armed conflict, Israel seized vast amounts of land intended for the Palestinian state, far past the UN-proposed Israeli borders. (Figure 2)



Why do people still call Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories

PALESTINE?

Although the entirety of Palestine is currently under Israeli control, Palestinians and their connection to the land have not been erased.

Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem (the Occupied Palestinian Territories) live under Israeli military rule, as they have since Israel occupied the territory in 1967.

Within Israel, about 20% of the population are Palestinians who hold Israeli citizenship, but live as second-class citizens denied national rights.

Finally, millions of Palestinian refugees still live in exile, barred from returning to their homes by discriminatory Israeli laws.

Those who call the land Palestine do so in honour of the continued existence of Palestinians, whose land was dispossessed from them and who continue to resist many forms of Israeli domination.

Why do people say "Free Palestine"?

"Free Palestine" is a phrase that calls for freedom for Palestinians, an end to their oppression by Israel.

It refers to all Palestinians whether they live under Israeli military occupation, as second-class citizens within Israel, or as refugees in exile.

"Free Palestine" is a call for a new political reality in which all people are equal and no group is privileged over another.

Figure 3.1



Figure 3.2



Figure 3.3



As depicted in the progression of maps in Figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3, Israel continues to increase its control over Palestinian land, especially through the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements.

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